

**GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY
MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS**

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Introduction - Trafficking in Persons in Guyana

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is one of the most lucrative criminal enterprises in the world, ranking in the top three (3) along with arms and drugs trafficking. It is perpetrated throughout the globe with Guyana, unfortunately, not being an exception.

Trafficking in Persons is defined in our Combating Trafficking in Persons Act No. 2 of 2005 as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by means of the threat or use of force or other means of coercion, or by abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or by the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purposes of exploitation.”

In Task Force awareness sessions, and in accordance with international best practices, the legal definition is usually disaggregated, as follows:

ACT	MEANS	PURPOSE
Recruitment	Threat or use of Force	Exploitation through:
Transport	Coercion	Prostitution
Transfer	Abduction	Forced/Undercompensated Labour
Harbouring	Deception	Organ Removal
Receipt of a Person(s)	Abuse of Power or Vulnerability	Other Forms of Exploitation
	Giving Payments or Benefits	

N.B. For child (individuals less than 18 years of age) trafficking, the 'Means' as seen above does not need to be present to establish the occurrence of the crime.

Guyana's Response

Given the amount of financial gain on offer for those who choose to perpetrate this crime, humans will be attracted to it despite the level of harm the crime causes to fellow humans. This may make the task of thwarting the efforts of these criminals seem insurmountable.

However, rest assured that the Government of Guyana is not daunted by this task. The Government, through the Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, and through individual efforts of Task Force Member Agencies, is committed to investing resources and collaborating with other stakeholders to reform and strengthen current strategies, and to implement new strategies, to effectively combat the ever-changing schemes of traffickers.

The Ministry of Public Security is entrusted with leading the multi-Agency Task Force – with the aim of fostering an environment of collaboration in activity implementation and information sharing among Agencies, and to ensure that existing arrangements are functioning efficiently and enhanced as necessary.

The Ministry of Public Security is ably supported by the Ministry of Social Protection, Guyana Police Force TIP and Immigration Departments, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Communities, Ministry of Natural Resources, Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Legal Affairs, Indigenous Peoples' Commission, Help and Shelter, Guyana Women Miners Organization, Food for the Poor and last but not least Burn the Price Tag. Valuable support is also received from such stakeholders as the Judiciary, Community Policing, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United States Embassy, among others.

The local commitment has been reflected recently in Guyana's elevation to Tier One (1) in the United States Department of State's 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report. However no Task Force Member takes it for granted that the job is done. There are many areas in which improvements can be made and continuous efforts by not only anti-TIP Agents but also the general public will go a long way in ensuring that Guyana becomes a place that is largely unattractive to traffickers.

The Task Force is in the process of implementing a 2017-2018 National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Response to Trafficking in Persons and has

recently completed a number of activities in this regard. Some of the more recent such activities are summarized as follows:

‘Feature Activity – Training Courses in Region 1’



Trainers and Participants at Matthew’s Ridge TIP Training

A five (5) member Team from the Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons featuring representation from the Ministry of Public Security, Counter TIP Unit of the Ministry of Social Protection, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, Guyana Police Force and Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecutions visited Region 1 from October 31 – November 6, 2017 to conduct a series of one (1) day trafficking in persons training sessions with Police Officers and other anti-TIP stakeholders.

The Task Force made presentations to a total of ninety-six (96) anti-TIP stakeholders, including twenty-seven (27) Police Officers, at Baramita (15), Matthews Ridge (15), Port Kaituma (28), Mabaruma (18) and Moruca (20) on the topics of ‘Definition of Trafficking in Persons (TIP)’, ‘TIP Victim Identification, Referral and Assistance’, ‘Application of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act No. 2 of 2005 in the Prosecution of TIP Cases in Guyana’, ‘Role and Responsibilities of the Task Force’ and, exclusively for the

Police contingent, 'Best Practices for the Investigation of Trafficking in Persons Cases'.



TIP Training Session at Mabaruma

Other participants included Toshaos, Probation Officers, Community Development Officers, Mines Officers, Teachers, Non-Governmental Organization Representatives, Village Councillors, Regional Representatives, Businesspersons, Health Professionals, Other Government Workers and Public-spirited Citizens.

In addition to the information imparted to participants during the Training Sessions, discussions also gave rise to recommendations which the Task Force would consider for implementation.

According to reports of alleged cases of trafficking in persons recorded by the TIP Unit of the Guyana Police Force, Region 1 is a close second only to Region 4 as it pertains to areas of origin for alleged victims of trafficking in persons in Guyana.

‘Sensitization – Middle Mazaruni, Region 7’

A four (4) member Task Force team from the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Unit of the Ministry of Social Protection and Guyana Geology and Mines Commission visited multiple locations in the Middle Mazaruni area, Region 7 from October 6-8, 2017.

The team held interactive discussions with community members, shop owners, dredge operators and others at Tamakay Backdam, Kurupung Landing, Isseneru, Poppyshow, Apaiqua and Olive Creek. Participants were sensitized on the definition of trafficking in persons, victim identification, services available for victims in Guyana, reporting to the TIP hotline number, inter alia.

During the visit the team erected posters at shops and at the primary school and health centre at Isseneru while also distributing brochures and other awareness materials.

According to reports of alleged cases of trafficking in persons recorded by the TIP Unit of the Guyana Police Force, Region 7 is second only to Region 4 as it pertains to locations where alleged cases of trafficking in persons occur most in Guyana.

‘Sensitization – Lethem Town Week, Region 9’

The Task Force was represented by six (6) Officers from the Ministry of Public Security, Guyana Police Force TIP Unit and Immigration, and the Counter TIP Unit of the Ministry of Social Protection for a visit to Lethem, Region 9 from October 17-21, 2017 for public sensitization on trafficking in persons as part of the inaugural Lethem Town Week celebrations.

During the visit, the Team manned an Awareness booth which welcomed a number of villagers celebrating Town Week. The Team also visited the St. Ignatius Secondary School where it was able to conduct an interactive sensitization session with Grade 7 students.



Students at the TIP Booth during Lethem Town Week



Presentation of Materials to St. Ignatius Secondary after TIP Awareness Session

The Task Force anticipates that the information shared and awareness materials distributed, which included brochures, posters and novelties such as hats, bags, keyrings, etc, would have served to increase the information base in Lethem with regard to the crime and encouraged persons to be alert to potential dangers, detect a possible occurrence of the crime, share information learnt with others, and make reports to the TIP hotline whenever they have reason for suspicion.

‘Sensitization – Qualfon Guyana Inc.’

A two (2) member team featuring the Task Force representative from Food for the Poor conducted a sensitization session with thirty (30) employees of Qualfon Guyana Inc. at its Plaisance, East Coast Demerara location on October 30, 2017. The session was requested by Qualfon as part of its initiative to have staff trained in a number of key areas.

The participants were in the 19-25 age group, which is the second most at-risk age group locally after the 12-18 age group according to reports of alleged cases of trafficking in persons recorded by the TIP Unit of the Guyana Police Force.

The team used the Task Force's TIP Brochure to inform participants with key details on the crime and how it can be prevented and also shared a short documentary and case study to reinforce the information presented.

Participants were interested in learning about penalties associated with the perpetration of the crime and with Guyana's ability to prosecute. They were also interested to learn of how they could contribute to the anti-TIP cause in Guyana. *N.B. On summary conviction for the crime of trafficking in persons, perpetrators face a sentence of 3-5 years while on indictment an offender faces a sentence of 5 years to life in prison. The Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act No. 2 of 2005 also provides for additional sentencing and/or fines if the crime was complicated by factors such as withholding of identification documents, serious injury to victim, inter alia.*

‘Sensitization – Massy Services-Money Gram Agents’



TIP Sensitization of Massy Services-Money Gram Agents

On November 8, 2017, three (3) Officers from the Ministry of Public Security, the TIP Unit of the Guyana Police Force and the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs represented the Task Force in a sensitization session with forty-three (43) Agents from Massy Services-Money Gram. The session was requested by Massy Services-Money Gram as part of its initiative to have staff trained in a number of key areas.

The team presented on the definition of trafficking in persons, victim identification, services available for victims, best practices for reporting the crime and the role and activities of the Task Force, inter alia.

The participants displayed a fair knowledge of the issue and some indicated that the information disseminated revealed that they may have come into contact with the crime directly/indirectly in the past. Participants also suggested that the Task Force should place more attention on 'following the money' and on collaborating with the appropriate stakeholders in this regard.

‘Trafficking in Persons Standard Operating Procedure Consultations – Ministry of Social Protection Initiative’

As part of an International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Ministry of Social Protection Collaborative Project Titled ‘Strengthening Guyana’s Capacity to effectively combat Trafficking in Persons and assist Victims of Trafficking’, members of the Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons attended an Inception Workshop and a Validation Workshop on November 22 and 29, 2017, respectively and also met with IOM Consultants on November 28, 2017.

The meeting was part of a series of Consultations held by the IOM with local stakeholders, which along with the Workshops, would form the basis for the crafting of ‘Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to strengthen investigation, prosecution, conviction and court procedures as well as strengthen identification, referral and protection of Victims of Trafficking (VoT)’ under funding from the United States Department of State’s Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP).

The Task Force looks forward to playing a committed role in support of the Ministry of Social Protection in the progressive implementation of this project and the eventual institution and administration of the SOPs.

‘Sensitization – Region 9 Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs Initiative’

In October and November, 2017, the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs (MoIPA) collaborated with the Ministry of Social Protection, Labour Department to conduct sensitization exercises with Toshaos

and Councillors from Region Nine (9) on their rights and responsibilities under the Sexual Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Labour Act and the Combating Trafficking in Persons Act.

The aim of the two (2) day sessions was to equip two (2) leaders from each village in the Region to be able to return to their villages and impart the knowledge gained to residents.

The first session was held in Lethem at St. Ignatius Village and saw the participation of twenty nine (29) individuals from seventeen (17) villages in Central and South Central Lethem; the second session was held at Aishalton and featured twenty-one (21) participants from eight (8) villages in Deep South Rupununi; and the final sessions were held at Karasabai and Annai and featured totals of twenty-two (22) participants from eight (8) communities and twenty three (23) participants from twelve (12) communities, respectively, from the North Rupununi.

The Welfare Department also collaborated with the Hinterland Employment and Youth Service (HEYS) Department within the MoIPA to sensitize sixty-one (61) Project Facilitators from Regions 3,4,7 and 8 on the crime of trafficking in persons. The Project Facilitators were expected to relay the information received to the approximately one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five (1,765) youths under their purview.

‘Sensitization – Region 8 Indigenous Peoples’ Commission Initiative’

On December 6, 2017 the Indigenous Peoples’ Commission’s representative on the Task Force delivered a presentation in Paramakatoi, Region 8 to sixteen (16) Councillors from four (4) Village Councils from Paramakatoi, Kato, Bamboo Creek and Taruka as part of a Capacity Building workshop held by IPC to strengthen to Village Councils.

The presentation focused on the elements of trafficking in persons and the role that the Councils could assume to reduce the likelihood of the crime being perpetrated in their Villages, which included ensuring that background checks were carried out on outsiders entering to recruit labour.

Other Activities

The Task Force also supported the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Unit of the Ministry of Social Protection in conducting a series of awareness sessions in Secondary Schools and Communities in Regions 3, 4, 5, 7 and 10 from November 16-23, 2017.

The Action Sub-Committee of the Task Force continued to support the Guyana Police Force TIP Unit's Surprise Inspections and Raids, most notably in two (2) recent activities featuring representation from the Guyana Police Force, Ministry of Social Protection and Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, with the support of Community Policing.

Open Invitation

The Task Force invites public-spirited citizens and other entities to get onboard. Please feel free to call the Task Force Secretariat at **226-5306** or the **TIP Hotline at 227-4083/623-5030** to share suggestions on how we can improve our efforts or for a discussion on how we can collaborate to increase existing efforts to combat trafficking in persons. If you are a Government Agency, Business, Non-Governmental Organization, Youth Group, Religious Organization or any other Organization/Group that would like staff/members to undergo a sensitization exercise or Workshop, please feel free to communicate same to the numbers shared above. In the new year, members of the public will have an opportunity to become 'TIP Volunteers' – more information would be shared in this regard at a later date.

Anyone can help us! We encourage you to. To do so, follow these steps: (1) Get educated on TIP – Learn how to protect yourself and loved ones (2) Know how to identify a victim of TIP (3) Share your newfound knowledge with others (4) Be Observant (5) Safety First, don't try to save the day if you see something suspicious (6) Report the suspicious situation to the **TIP Hotline at 227-4083/623-5030** or send email to counter_traffickinginpersons@yahoo.com including as many details as possible – Calls to the TIP Hotline are confidential!

Join us in the fight against Human Trafficking!

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY

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